

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
BY THE
STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
359.30-526

A. STATEMENT OF INTENT:

The State of Tennessee, Department of Children's Services (DCS) issues this Request for Information (RFI) for the purpose of soliciting provider agencies interest to participate in Phase I of the DCS' performance based contracting initiative for residential services. It is the Department's intent to move toward a performance based contracting system beginning July 01, 2006 with a select group of provider agencies who meet established criteria, which are described below. This is the first phase of a greater overarching plan to achieve better and timelier outcomes for the children we serve. In the past DCS purchased out-of-home care services for children in its custody in return for a per diem reimbursement. Performance based contracting uses an innovative approach that stresses outcomes for children and utilizes a payment structure that reinforces efforts on the part of provider agencies to offer those services that improve outcomes. The outcomes will be measured as improved timeliness and likelihood of permanency (reunification, adoption, or guardianship), reduced placement moves, and reduced re-entries into care. Outcomes will be measured relative to appropriate standards. DCS will select four (4) to eight (8) provider agencies to participate in Phase I of this initiative beginning July 1, 2006. Phase II will occur six months from the initial start of the initiative (January 01, 2007). Additional provider agencies, meeting established criteria, will be invited to participate in the performance based outcomes initiative at that time.

B. BACKGROUND:

The Department of Children's Services is moving toward a system that focuses on outcomes for children and families within the context of their community. Those outcomes are safety, permanency, and well-being. Provider agencies are an integral partner in the Department's effort to achieve its overarching objectives. It is the Department's view that the reform agenda can be advanced by aligning better the outcomes it seeks with the mechanisms it uses to purchase services from its partners. The performance based contracting system initiative is one step in this direction. It should also be noted that this initiative is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Brian A. Settlement Agreement.

Listed below are the criteria that, comply with the Department's visions, goals and objectives for the delivery of services that are strength' based, culturally competent, and family focused. Provider agencies for Phase I will be selected from those provider agencies that successfully respond to this solicitation. In order for a provider agency to participate in Phase I, the following requirements **must** be met:

- Agency must be accredited or have applied for accreditation with accreditation expected within three (3) years of July 01, 2006.
- Agency must serve 30 or more children in two-year period. This is the minimum number of children served that will allow for a reliable Phase I test of the model. This is solely a requirement of Phase I and may or may not apply to subsequent phases.
- Agency is able to provide the range of services needed to improve outcomes for all children in DCS custody and placed in out-of-home care (Dependent & Neglect, Juvenile Justice, Unruly). If the agency does not provide the full range of services, then the agency must demonstrate the ability to enter into contracts with partner organizations such that the full range of services is available through the network of services with which the agency has contracted. The range of services includes but is not necessarily limited to the following: out-of-home care, intensive in-home services, independent living services, and those other services that relate directly to achieving outcomes.
- Agency must have all required licenses and educational requirements.
- Agency is willing to sign a three-year contract with the possibility of an additional two-year term extension based on performance.
- Agency's current performance, as measured with tools developed by the Department, is acceptable to DCS.
- Agency is fully functional, financially solvent, and prepared to provide services on July 01, 2006.
- Agency must maintain and have access to operating capital of ninety (90) days.

C. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

C.1. The State is requesting the following information from all interested parties:

Interested parties will submit the following documents:

- Identify the grand region or regions agency will serve;
- Agency capacity by Level of Care (LOC) and region;
- All appropriate licenses, accreditations, application for accreditation and educational requirements. If subcontracting services the licenses, accreditations, application for accreditation and educational requirements;
- Liability Insurance;
- Documentation from a financial institution attesting to its financial health (copy of the most recent independent audit);

- Documentation of access to operating capital for a period of ninety (90) days;
- Applicants need to do a brief description that addresses the below elements:
 - a) Historical data;
 - b) Statement of readiness;
 - c) Agency capacity;
- Applicants also need to develop a general statement of the strategies they would utilize to achieve the designated outcomes. Statements should be no longer than two (2) to five (5) pages; and
- Agency plan to improve the identified outcomes for children and families.

C.2. Please feel free to contact the Department of Children's Services with any questions regarding this RFI. The main point of contact will be:

Meredith Sacks, MSW
Child Placement & Private Providers
Tennessee Department of Children's Services
8th Floor Cordell Hull Building
436 6th Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37243-1290
Phone: 615-532-5626
Fax: 615-532-2263
meredith.sacks@state.tn.us

D. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING

Responses must be sent via certified mail and include all documents requested in Section C. 1. of this RFI.

D.1. Submit your response to this Request for Information to:

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Tennessee Department of Children's Services
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Nashville, TN 37243-1290

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D.2. Please reference **Request for Information # 359.30-526** with your response to this request.

- D.3. Please respond by midnight on **January 13, 2006**. All responses received after 12:01 A.M. will not be considered for Phase I.
- D.4 DCS will convene a meeting with all provider agencies who submit statements of interest meeting the above criteria on **January 27, 2006 at 10:00 a.m.** in the Tennessee conference room, located on the first floor of the Cordell Hull building. The meeting topics will include, but not limited to: scope of service, rate structure, terms and conditions, and Phase II and III implementation plans.